



# News Release

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**Southwest Region (Arizona • New Mexico • Oklahoma • Texas)** [www.fws.gov/southwest/](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/)

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## **DRAFT ASSESSMENT OF WATER STATIONS ON REFUGE LANDS COMPLETE: *Public Input Being Solicited***

Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) announces the availability for public review and comment of a draft assessment on the compatibility of a proposal to establish and maintain drinking water stations on the Refuge to prevent deaths due to dehydration. The Refuge is encouraging input by the public on this Draft Compatibility Determination before a final decision is made whether to permit the proposed use.

Over the past several months Refuge staff has been working with humanitarian organizations to identify a way to place water stations on the Refuge in a manner that causes the least impact to sensitive Refuge lands and resources. Through these efforts both entities have identified specific measures that allow the goals of both groups to be met.

In a Compatibility Determination the Refuge Manager reviews a proposed use on a refuge and determines whether the use is compatible with the purpose for which the refuge was established. If determined to be compatible, then the use may be permitted. If the use is determined incompatible, then it is not permitted to occur on the Refuge. Compatibility determinations are provided to the public for review and comment.

This draft determination finds the proposed use ‘compatible’ with stipulations.

When completing compatibility determinations, the Refuge Manager uses sound professional judgment to determine if a proposed use will materially interfere or detract from the fulfillment of the Service’s mission or the purpose of the Refuge. When preparing a compatibility determination, the Refuge Manager must also decide whether or not there are sufficient resources, including staffing and funding, to manage or oversee the use.

This assessment finds that when established and maintained within the agreed upon stipulations these water stations should result in a decrease in the number of individuals dying due to dehydration on Refuge lands, decreased traffic by illegal immigrants in sensitive areas away from water stations, reduced environmental impact by efforts of humanitarian organizations, and a greater likelihood of habitat protection, recovery and restoration.

The Draft Compatibility Determination is available on-line at: <http://www.fws.gov/southwest>  
Copies may also be obtained by visiting the Arivaca and Green Valley Public Libraries.

The interested public has until close of business on Monday, May 3, 2010 to provide comments in writing to Refuge Headquarters, P.O. Box 109, Sasabe, AZ, 85633. Also, written comments may be sent by fax to (520) 823-4247 or by e-mail to [Mike\\_Hawkes@fws.gov](mailto:Mike_Hawkes@fws.gov).

Comments received will be reviewed and, if appropriate, incorporated into the Final Compatibility Determination. Individuals who submit comments will be notified upon completion of the Final Compatibility Determination.

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The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

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